

Military cutbacks in East bloc

LONDON (R) — A drive for military cutbacks spread through Europe's Communist bloc Monday, as East Germany and Poland announced reductions in troops and defence spending and Poland said some Soviet units would withdraw from its territory. East Berlin and Warsaw appeared to be taking their cue from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who has announced both armed forces reductions and defence budget cuts in the past two months. The moves also seemed linked to the opening of new talks in six weeks time between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, which will aim to wipe out imbalances between the two blocs' military forces and bring down their numbers throughout Europe. In Geneva, meanwhile, a top Soviet disarmament negotiator gave new details of Moscow's recent pledge to remove some short-range nuclear weapons from Eastern Europe, but said only a few would be involved (see story below). East German leader Erich Honecker said his country would unilaterally cut its armed forces — totalling 176,000 men, according to Western estimates — by 10,000 men and reduce military spending by 10 per cent by the end of next year. In Warsaw, a senior general said Poland was reducing arms purchases.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

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Visits ministries of agriculture, energy and mineral resources, tourism

King directs ministry to compensate farmers

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday issued directives to the Ministry of Agriculture to compensate farmers whose crops were severely affected by the recent wave of frost.

The directives were issued during a visit the King paid to the Ministry of Agriculture, accompanied by Prime Minister Zaid Rafai and Royal Court Chief Field Marshal Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker.

King Hussein said due attention should be given to training of ministry staff with a view to raising their standards and improving their performance. Ministry employees should attend refresher and in-depth courses in different specialisations to acquaint themselves with up-to-date technology and applications, the King said.

He added that proper attention should be given by the ministry to the problem of disintegration and misuse of land, and emphasised the need for the ministry to improve the strains of wheat produced in Jordan in the dry lands and to help farmers make better use of agricultural land.

The King said comprehensive land surveys and land reclamation should be carried out.

The King said the ministry should help maintain Jordan's credibility in Arab and foreign markets and should help rid the Jordan Valley and Aqaba regions

of insects and harmful pests.

"We want Jordan to assume an advanced status in the field of agriculture and benefit from Arab, regional and international expertise and experiments in this regard," King Hussein said.

The King also visited the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources and the Natural Resources Authority and was briefed by Minister Hisham Al Khatib on the ministry's efforts to benefit from alternative sources of energy.

Al Khatib said the first solar energy station in the region was established in Jordan and that the Kingdom was considered advanced in the field of energy studies and utilisation.

The minister said that workers in government agencies were being trained to use computers through advanced courses, pointing out that several friendly countries have benefited from the Jordanian experience in the area of consultancies on energy.

Al Khatib added that in the area of geology and minerals, a comprehensive study had been conducted to discover natural mineral resources in the Kingdom in addition to encouraging the establishment of local industries such as the glass and ceramic industries. He said the national effort for the exploration of oil has achieved progress in cooperation with the ministry.

The minister also briefed King Hussein on the ministry's project to increase cereal production and to green the Kingdom.

Jaber also spoke about the ministry's programmes to combat desert locusts through special teams.

At the end of the visit, King Hussein signed the ministry's reg-

(Continued on page 2)



His Majesty King Hussein Monday visits the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (Photos by Yousef Al 'Allan and Petra)

LAST-MINUTE NEWS

Bush says U.S. to seek peace

CAIRO (R) — President George Bush told Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Monday the United States was keen to play a positive role in Arab-Israeli peace, the Middle East News Agency (MENA) reported. MENA said Bush, who began his first working day as president Monday, called Mubarak by telephone to thank him for a message of congratulations sent when he took office Friday. Bush also said Washington wanted to increase cooperation with Cairo.

Syria: Arabs ready to work with Bush

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria said Monday that Arabs would cooperate with new U.S. President Bush if he worked for a just peace in the Middle East. "If the Bush administration can match words with deeds it will find the Arabs, all Arabs, are actually more interested and ready to further cross steps towards the long-sought peace in the Middle East," said the daily Syria Times. "This peace should not be based on adopting Israel's stances in total at the expense of the Arabs as has been always the case with previous American administrations," the paper said in a commentary.

Norwegians were PLO-Israeli 'mailmen'

OSLO (AP) — Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg was quoted Monday as saying the Norwegian Labour Party passed messages between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israeli groups for five years. "While Labour was in opposition we acted as mailman between PLO and certain Israeli groups. Since Labour took over the government in May 1986 we also arranged contacts between PLO and American authorities," Stoltenberg told the Klassekampen daily. He did not identify the Israelis to whom the messages were delivered or discuss their content.

Kuwait fights new locust invasion

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait sent aircraft Monday to spray insecticide on locust swarms threatening farms near its southern Waqra region, the Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA) reported. It quoted an agriculture official as saying a swarm of locusts invaded Sunday. A first swarm settled in northern Kuwait in October, part of the biggest locust wave to hit the Gulf in more than 20 years.

Soviet official reiterates Afghan pledge

GENEVA (R) — Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Karpov said Monday Soviet troops would be out of Afghanistan by Feb. 15 as promised unless the situation there changed dramatically. Asked if Moscow would stick to its commitments, made last April in a U.N.-mediated settlement, he said: "As far as I know, if there is nothing that can dramatically change the situation there, our troops will go."

Spanish minister cancels Morocco trip

MADRID (R) — Spanish Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez Ordóñez postponed a visit to Morocco after King Hassan compared his war against Polisario guerrillas to the Spanish government's battle with the Basque separatist group ETA. A Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said Monday the postponement was forced by Fernandez Ordóñez's European Economic Community (EEC) timetable and declined to say if it related to King Hassan's comments in the newspaper *El País* Sunday.

Who's a Jew' law challenged

TEL AVIV (AP) — A group of immigrants appealed to Israel's supreme court Monday over the government's refusal to register them as Jews because they were converted by non-orthodox rabbis. The appeal has again raised the controversial "who is Jew" question, which was a hot election issue last fall and deeply angered American and Canadian Jewry. The court case was brought after the interior ministry refused to register the 10 immigrants and, instead, referred their cases to rabbinical courts, said Yehoshua Schoffman, an attorney for three of the immigrants.

Argentine troops retake barracks

LA TABLADA, Argentina (R) — Argentine troops Monday regained control of an army barracks after four hours of intense fighting with members of an insurgent "New Argentine Army" in which at least nine people died.

An officer on guard at the entrance to the La Tablada barracks on the outskirts of Buenos Aires told reporters most of the insurgents, earlier estimated by police at around 50, had "been eliminated."

The officer did not say how many had died in the fighting but the Diario Y Noticias news agency estimated between 20 and 30 people had been killed.

Earlier in the day, an official statement said four soldiers had been killed while the official Telem news agency reported two policemen and three insurgents had also died.

The insurgent group, calling itself the "New Argentine Army," smashed through the main gates of the barracks in a stolen Coca Cola lorry soon after dawn and lobbed grenades at buildings where soldiers slept, local news agencies reported.

Government forces quickly surrounded the base, which quarters the Third Mechanised Infantry Regiment.

Pamphlets scattered by the group said they belonged to a group calling itself the "New Argentine Army" which supported the leaders of three failed army rebellions over the past two years, the agencies said.

The pamphlets said the group had been formed to "combat Marxist subversion within the government" and was against "the Radical (governing party) campaign" destroy the army."

Monday's disturbance marked the second outbreak of violence at an Argentine army base in seven weeks.

In early December a group of 500 soldiers, mostly Falklands war veterans, staged a four day rebellion, demanding changes in the army

Iran, Syria in new bid to end militia feud

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Iran and Syria began talks Monday aimed at ending three weeks of heavy fighting between the rival Amal and Hezbollah militias in Lebanon.

Officials said Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati attended a meeting at the Damascus Foreign Ministry with his Syrian counterpart Farouq Al Sharaa and Nabil Berri, leader of one of the feuding militias, Amal.

Diplomats said that depending on progress at the talks leaders of Amal could meet later with representatives of Hezbollah (Party of God).

Fighting between the militias in Beirut and South Lebanon has killed at least 142 people and wounded scores more since Jan. 1.

In his talks with Velayati and Berri, Berri demanded the assassins of three of his commanders, officials reported.

Velayati said the talks were moving positively. "We hope to reach a solution to this problem," he said.

Diplomats noted that Hezbollah's spiritual mentor, Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, was not in Damascus.

No fresh fighting has erupted between the militias in Lebanon over the past few days since Iran and Syria stepped up efforts to achieve a truce.

that his country would withdraw some of its battlefield nuclear weapons.

The United States has said that NATO has reduced its nuclear stockpile in Europe by 2,400 warheads since 1979.

Karpov told the gathering of government officials and scholars from 30 countries which follows the close last week of the 27-month conference on security and cooperation in Europe (CSCE), that the gap between NATO and Warsaw Pact proposals on reducing conventional weapons could be bridged.

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Despite serious differences, there is a certain simi-

Quake hits Soviet Central Asia; at least 1,400 dead

MOSCOW (Agencies) — An earthquake struck the Soviet Central Asian Republic of Tajikistan Monday, engulfing an entire village in mud, and Radio Moscow gave a provisional death toll of 1,415.

The tremor, the second serious

quake in the Soviet Union in two months, killed at least 600 people in the village of Sharora when it sent a wall of mud pouring down in a mountainous part of the republic near the Afghan border, the Tajik News Agency editor said.

The nearby village of Okulibolo was completely engulfed in mud after the quake, which measured seven points on the 12-point Soviet scale at its epicentre 50 kilometres southwest of the Tajik capital, Dushanbe.

"According to preliminary reports, 1,415 people died," Radio Moscow said on its English-language service. Tajik officials in Moscow gave a similar figure, but

the official news agency TASS said up to 1,000 people were estimated to have died.

A spokesman for the Tajik Foreign Ministry said the republic's deputy prime minister, Georgy Koshlakov, had told a news conference in Dushanbe that the village of Okulibolo had been completely buried by mud.

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Iraq releases 131 Iranians in peace gesture

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq freed 131 sick, wounded or elderly Iranian prisoners Monday in a peace gesture ahead of efforts by a U.N. mediator to revive talks between the Gulf war foes.

The prisoners were the first to be released by either Iran or Iraq since November. Between them they hold more than 100,000 prisoners from the eight-year war.

The Iranians flew to Tehran aboard an airliner chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Officials said they would be followed by a second batch of 124 Tuesday.

"It is a unilateral step by Iraq and we don't know what the next stage is," said the ICRC chief in Baghdad, Andreas Kuhn. He said all 131 had been medically examined and were willing to go home.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein promised to free 255 prisoners as a peace gesture in response to an appeal by a conference of Muslim clerics in Baghdad this month.

Wearing yellow uniforms, some the Iranians sat silently with heads bowed at Baghdad airport before boarding the plane.

"War is not good, especially between Muslims," said one of them, Anoush Toosi, 35, a former medical student at Iran's Shiraz University.

"The Iraqis are not our enemies... people want peace but the problem lies with political leaders," said Toosi, adding that he

hoped to resume his studies, cut short by the war.

"War happens between two countries, we have no hand in it," said Qassem Islah, 41, a former customs official at Khorramshahr in the northern Gulf.

"I wish peace to prevail and to live happily," he said.

The release came the same day as U.N. mediator Jan Eliasson was to arrive in Tehran to attempt to revive stalled peace talks that began five days after an Aug. 20 ceasefire halted the war.

Three rounds of the U.N.-sponsored peace negotiations made little progress and adjourned in November amid disagreement over a prisoner exchange, troop withdrawals and sovereignty over the Shatt Al Arab waterway.

Eliasson, personal representative of U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, will discuss the stalemate with Iranian leaders during his five-day visit before taking his mission to Baghdad.

An exchange of sick and wounded prisoners in November broke down after three days when Iran cut the number of prisoners it had promised to free and Iraq retaliated with similar action.

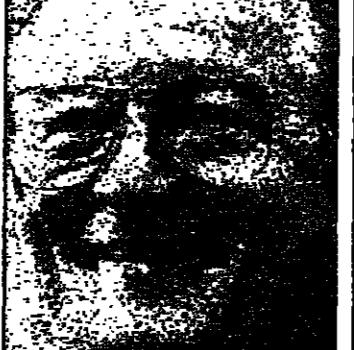
Dumas ends Israel visit

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas left Israel for France Monday after a 36-hour visit.

Dumas made no comment before departing Ben Gurion airport, but during his trip had urged Israelis and Palestinians to open peace talks.

Dumas met with President Chaim Herzog, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Finance Minister Shimon Peres during his visit.

"Peace can only come about only via direct negotiations between the parties directly involved, and that means mutual, reciprocal recognition," Dumas



Roland Dumas said at a press conference following his meetings with Israeli leaders.

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JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME ONE

15:30	Koran
15:40	Programme review
15:45	Children programmes
16:40	Educational programme
17:10	Religious programme
18:00	News summary in Arabic
18:05	Programme on world news
18:20	Programme on children
19:10	Agricultural programme
19:45	Programme review
20:00	News in Arabic
21:30	Programme review
21:40	Local programme
22:30	Arabic programme
23:00	News summary in Arabic
18:00	La Chaine
19:00	News in French
19:15	French varieties

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00	Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
18:00	St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
18:00	Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
18:00	De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
18:00	Terrassa Church Tel: 623366
18:00	Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

PRAYER TIMES

19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Who's the Boss
21:10	Sophia and Constance
22:00	News in English
22:20	Adderly

CHURCHES

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered showers, especially in the northern and central regions, and another increase in temperature is expected. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy with scattered
moderate wind and calm sea.

WEATHER

AMMAN:
Dr. Sami Al Khouri 681373
Dr. Khalid Ma'idi 743500
Dr. Muhammad Al 'Abdali 778959
Dr. Ahmed Al Dagen 676453
Firs pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 657055
Nafroukh pharmacy 623672

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Tel: 625383, Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771351.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Epiphany Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 685326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel: 811295.
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The Afghan capital, Kabul, is under siege by rebel forces and reports say that there is a chronic shortage of food and fuel.

Pravda paints gloomy picture of Kabul

MOSCOW (Agencies) —

Afghans are suffered from food shortages caused by rebel attacks, economic sabotage and bad winter weather, Pravda said Sunday in a gloomy portrait of life in the Afghanistan capital Kabul.

It said Afghans standing in line for food in the bitter cold were blaming both the government and the rebels for food shortages.

Pravda accused rebel leaders of entering Kabul to buy up food supplies and spirit them out of the city.

It quoted Afghan Defence Minister Shakh Navaz Tanay as saying that during a sweep of the city in search of weapons, soldiers found "big supplies of food and goods of priority need."

Supply roads into Kabul have been blocked periodically this month by rebel attacks and by heavy snows. The Soviet news agency TASS said six Soviet transport planes arrived in Kabul Saturday bringing tons of badly needed food supplies.

Pravda said supply trucks started getting through the snow and rebel attacks again Jan. 19.

Soviet television said Sunday that food shortages in Kabul were partly caused by what it called "conscious sabotage" by some Afghan civil servants who supported the rebels, as well as by bureaucratic inefficiency.

The television, monitored by

the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), said guerrillas

were "trying to strangle the Kabul regime by hunger. The Pakistani authorities... also bear responsibility for the current tragedy."

A Soviet television correspondent said in a dispatch from the Afghan capital that the situation in Kabul had become more critical in recent weeks.

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National News

JORDAN TIMES, TUESDAY JANUARY 24, 1989 3

Lawzi, Australian senator discuss Mideast issues

AMMAN (Petra) — Australia said Monday that it considers the proposed international Middle East conference as the best forum for establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East since it can provide international guarantees for all parties in the conflict.

Australia's views were expressed by Christopher John Puplick, a member of the Australian Senate, at a meeting with the Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Al Lawzi.

"Australia supports the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination on Palestinian soil and regards the present opportunity for peace as very precious and should not be missed," Sen. Puplick said at the meeting.

He said Australia views Israel's current measures against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories as violating human rights, laws and principles.

The Australian senator paid tribute to His Majesty King Hussein's relentless efforts to promote

the peace process and said that Jordan constitutes one of the most important pillars for the achievement of peace in the region.

Lawzi said that the proposed international conference was needed to implement U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Jordan, he said, seeks peace in exchange for land, and a settlement that respects and recognises the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in their homeland.

"The loss of the present chance for peace would open the door for further tension and conflicts in the region," Lawzi added.

He described Israel's atrocities in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a flagrant violation of human rights and international laws and principles.

He called on Australian parliamentarians to exert efforts to help establish a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

CONDOLENCES: His Majesty King Hussein Monday delegated the governor of Irbid to convey condolences to Al Widyan family in the village of Kharaj on the death of the late Mohammad Isa Al Widyan, the father of Major General Badrullah Al Widyan. (Petra)

ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION: A symposium on environmental pollution in Jordan will open at the Abdul Hamid Shoman Cultural Centre in Shmeisani on Jan. 30, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor. The symposium was organised by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Jordan in cooperation with the Amman Club for Jordanian Business and Professional Women. (J.T.)

MINISTERS RECEIVE ITALIAN ENVOY: Information Minister Han Khasawneh Monday received Italian Ambassador in Amman Francesco de Curta and discussed with him issues of common interest. Transport and Telecommunications Minister Khaled Al Haj Hassan also received the Italian ambassador and discussed with him bilateral relations in the field of transport and telecommunications. (Petra)

RSS TEAM SURVEYS PROJECT: A Royal Scientific Society engineering team Monday conducted a field study of the government departments complex project in Dair Abu Sa'id. (Petra)

HMOUD RECEIVES U.S. AMBASSADOR: Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Marwan Al Hmooud Monday received U.S. Ambassador in Amman Roscoe Suddarth and discussed with him means to expand cooperation in the fields of preserving the environment, environment planning, studying regional planning, in addition to benefiting from U.S. expertise in these fields. (Petra)

TAFILEH GOVERNOR INSPECTS: The Governor of Tafileh, accompanied by local officials and civil defence officers Monday inspected roads and areas affected by the snow and heavy rains that fell in southern Jordan and blocked many roads and disrupted communications. The governor urged bedouin tribes to move their tents away from the wadis and low-lying areas in Qadisieh, Rashadieh and Grandal, for fear of a rise in the level of stream water as a result of the melting snow. Public works teams and municipal workers were reported hard at work opening roads and repairing damages.

MANAGEMENT COURSE ENDS: Eleven people from North Yemen, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan Monday concluded a two-week course at the Jordan Institute of Management. The course focused on selection and training of manpower, wages and laws related to performance appraisal of employees. (Petra)

ART EXHIBITION: The governor of Irbid Monday opened a five-day plastic art season at the Professional Association Complex in Irbid. The season contains the works of Jordanian plastic artists. There are 84 pieces on display depicting life, nature, heritage, and national causes. (Petra)

SALT ELECTIONS: Twenty eight people were nominated Monday to stand for the Salt municipal election due to be held next Monday. The deputy Balqa governor has said that there will be ten polling centres and 18,145 electors. (Petra)

ROAD PROJECTS: The Um Njasah Municipal Council, in Balqa Governorate, Monday offered a JD 20,000 tender to open a number of roads in the village within three months. (Petra)

Twin test-tube boys born at medical centre

By Abdullah Nsour
Al Ra'i Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A twin test-tube baby boys were born at the King Hussein Medical Centre in Amman Saturday, and the mother and babies were reported in good condition.

Dr. Aref Bataineh headed a team of gynaecologists who supervised the delivery, the first to be carried out at the King Hussein Medical Centre, which created a national test-tube programme in April 1988.

Dr. Bataineh said that the mother had been trying to have children for the past 17 years with no result.

Dr. Bataineh did not disclose the name of the mother who is kept under surveillance.

The first ever test-tube babies

in Jordan were delivered in April 1986 by a Jordanian team of gynaecologists led by Dr. Zaid Kilani.

Dr. Kilani now operates the Jordan Centre for Infertility which, he said, now takes care of numerous test-tube cases within a programme that covers Jordan and Arab countries.

Dr. Kilani said that his centre has arranged for the delivery of 18 babies and is supervising a programme for the delivery of 22 others inside Jordan.

His programme includes cases in Algeria, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Syria and Jordan.

In April 1988 a team of gynaecologists at Al Bashir Hospital performed a caesarean section on a 27-year-old Jordanian woman who gave birth to twin test-tube baby boys.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ An exhibition of works by Contemporary Arab Artists at Al Wasiti Art Gallery.
- ★ A plastic art exhibition by Egyptian artist Yassin Ibrahim Mohammad Al at the Housing Bank Gallery.
- ★ An exhibition of photographic works by Wols (Otto Wolfgang) Schulz at the Goethe Institute.
- ★ The Jordanian plastic art season which includes a general exhibition of works by Jordanian artists at the Professional Association Complex in Irbid.

CONCERT

- ★ A concert by the German guitar-duo Thomas Offermann and Jens Wagner at the Ballroom of the Amman Hotel — 8:00 p.m.

FILMS

- ★ A German film entitled "Moorfelden" (in Arabic) at the Goethe Institute — 8:00 p.m.
- ★ A scientific film on the mechanism and functions of the brain, (part 4), at the American Centre — 7:00 p.m.



Amman governor briefs police officers

A group of police officers from the Amman Police Academy Monday called at the governor's headquarters and were briefed on the Amman Governorate's achievements. The governor, Mohammad Ali Al Amin, briefed the visitors on water, power, health, telecommunications and school

projects in Amman Governorate. Those, he said, are being carried out in cooperation with a total of 10 joint service councils working within the governorate. Amin also talked about infrastructure projects within the Amman region (Petra photo)

Jordanian-Egyptian holding company begins talks in Cairo

CAIRO (J.T.) — The joint Jordanian-Egyptian Holding Company has opened meetings in Cairo to discuss lean meat and fodder projects which will be implemented in Egypt with a total of 50 million Egyptian pounds.

Jordan is represented at the meeting by Minister of Industry and Trade Hamdi Tabbaa and his ministry's Secretary General Mohammad Saqqaf who arrived in the Egyptian capital earlier Monday.

The two-day meetings will also review a general plan for the holding company in 1989 and accomplishments made in the past year, in addition to several financial and administrative measures and the company's new budget, according to officials

from the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

They said Tabbaa will also head Jordan's side to a meeting with Egyptian officials to prepare for the joint Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee meetings which will convene on Jan. 28 in Cairo to review progress in joint projects, covering cultural, educational, tourism, industrial, energy, information and other fields.

Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sidki said in an interview published in Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times that the higher committee will discuss bilateral trade which is expected to amount to \$350 million during 1989, up from \$250 million in 1988.

On Jan. 16 the holding company's Director Midhat Abdul Aziz told a press conference in Amman that the company will begin livestock production to cover demand for lean meat in Jordan and Egypt. He said that initial production will be 14,200 tonnes of meat and 20,800 heads of sheep a year.

The project, to be established near the Egyptian port of Alexandria, would cost about \$12 million and production was due to start towards the end of 1989, according to Abdul Aziz.

He put the projected annual demand in Egypt at 238,000 tonnes of lean meat and at 41,000 tonnes in Jordan by 1995.

The Cairo meetings follow last week's talks held in Amman by teams from both countries to discuss cooperation in industry-related affairs.

Ministry to tighten quality control operations for drugs

By Salameh B. Ne'matt
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Health Ministry plans to tighten its drug quality control operations and expand its laboratory to cover more medicines consumed by the Jordanian public, Health Minister Zubair Malhas told the Jordan Times.

Malhas said the ministry's drug quality control laboratory, established in 1980, was well-staffed and "fairly well equipped," but that it could not handle the large volume of medicines imported into the country.

"The lab has not been able to expand to check all drugs imported to Jordan," Malhas said in an interview. The lab checks about 770 imported drugs through random sampling. However, there are 3,000 brands to drug that the lab cannot handle. He put the ratio of drug quality control on imported medicines at only 10 per cent.

"I have given instructions to cover 20 per cent," the minister said, pointing out that the ministry was setting up a new programme to expand the quality control laboratory to cover all drugs imported to Jordan.

His programme includes cases in Algeria, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Syria and Jordan.

In April 1988 a team of gynaecologists at Al Bashir Hospital performed a caesarean section on a 27-year-old Jordanian woman who gave birth to twin test-tube baby boys.

drug quality control laboratory in the Nweijeh area to cover more medicines.

The ministry, he said, has recently disposed of seven types of expired drugs. The loss, according to the minister, was incurred by the retail pharmacists because it was their responsibility to return the expired medicines to the drug agent as soon as the medicines expired.

Asked whether the ministry had plans to adopt drug control regulations such as those carried out in the United States and Britain, the minister said such measures were not practicable in Jordan.

He said that deterrent measures in the U.S. were very stiff because of the general practices are largely under control due to fear from malpractice lawsuits and harsh penalties imposed on violators.

In Jordan, he said, such measures were not possible because of the general laxity in control legislation and law enforcement. "For example," he said, "nobody, not even doctors in Jordan, carry malpractice insurance."

He hinted that drug agents were behind what he described as "rumours" about the deficiency of local medicine.

"Obviously, it is in the interest of importers to say so, but they have not proven it.

"Proof, if there was any, may apply to a very small number of drugs."

Commenting on charges by patients that locally-manufactured drugs were lower in quality from imported medicines, the minister said such charges were baseless.

"I don't think anybody has a solid base to prove or disprove that imported medicine was far better in quality than locally manufactured medicine," he asserted.

However, he contended, "certain medicines vary in composition of ingredients, potency and effectiveness, and may not have the same effects when taken by patients."

He said local manufacturers were aware of regulations and were committed to standard specifications, and that "from my own practice, there is no proof to the opposite."

He hinted that drug agents were behind what he described as "rumours" about the deficiency of local medicine.

"Obviously, it is in the interest of importers to say so, but they have not proven it.

"Proof, if there was any, may apply to a very small number of drugs."

Geographic centre gets remote sensing equipment from France

AMMAN (J.T.) — French Ambassador to Jordan Patrick Leclercq Monday presented to the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre in Amman a collection of equipment used in remote sensing techniques.

The equipment were handed to the centre's Director General, Brig. Oklah Duheinat, who discussed with the ambassador the centre's projects.

France helped set up the centre in Amman which specialises in

preparing maps using aerial photography and other techniques.

The centre is also adopting the remote sensing technique to help draw maps and explore water and natural resources in the country.

A series of meetings were held in Amman over the past two years to discuss prospects of using remote sensing with the help of a Norwegian company which had been initially employed to conduct

remote sensing in the exploration of underground water resources in the Wadi Araba and the area south of the Dead Sea.

Several working papers were submitted to a symposium held under the chairmanship of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan in October 1987 focusing on environmental science, agriculture and desertification, as well as exploration of water and mineral resources through remote sensing.

Hmoud visits Mafraq Governorate

MAFRAC (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Marwan Hmoud said in Mafraq that studies are underway for the distribution of fuel to municipal and village councils.

The minister made the statement at a meeting during a tour of Mafraq Governorate where he took part in Arbor Day celebrations.

Hmoud was briefed on projects being implemented in the Mafraq region and decided to set up a committee, which will group representatives of the ministry, the Cities and Villages Development

Bank and the local councils, to work out recommendations for future projects in the Mafraq region.

The minister took part in tree planting ceremonies along with local residents who planted trees on a 440 dunums of land assigned as a public park.

Hmoud, accompanied by the Mafraq governor and local officials, later inspected a newly built marketplace that cost JD 150,000, a bus terminal and a huge sheep enclosure set up by the municipality of Mafraq.

Jordanian, Egyptian aides complete study on project to link grids

AMMAN (J.T.) — Energy officials and specialists from Jordan, Egypt and an international consultancy firm have completed a feasibility study on a project for linking the national grids of Egypt and Jordan, and a full report on the study will be submitted to the joint Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee in Cairo on Jan. 28 for approval, according to an official announcement here Monday.

The announcement was made following the end of meetings held by concerned teams at the headquarters of the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) in Amman.

According to the announcement, the \$170 million project will take four years to implement, but its commencement is pending approval by the two governments in Amman and Cairo following the project's endorsement by the higher committee next week.

The project being implemented in cooperation with the French firm Electricite de France, entails laying a submarine cable connecting Aqaba Thermal Power station and two points in Egypt — one in the Sinai peninsula and the other in the Suez.

According to JEA officials, work on the project can begin this year, but it will not be operational before 1993. The officials quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the project entails laying a 10-kilometre 400-kilovolt cable line from the thermal station along the Aqaba Gulf on the Jordanian side, a submarine cable extending 12 kilometres and a 290 kilometres of 500-kilovolt overhead line across the Sinai Desert into Egyptian territory.

The linkage with Egypt, the officials said, will be set up for the first time, a power grid interconnection in the region.

Ministers of Energy from Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Turkey decided at a meeting in Ankara to start preliminary studies for the project.

According to Turkish sources, the Islamic Development Bank would finance the cost of the preliminary studies with a grant.

They said that a technical team will hold a meeting in Amman in March with the bank authorities to choose a consulting firm for the project.

Petra said that the five countries were also contemplating the idea of linking their grids at a later stage with that of Europe through Turkey.

clause for possible inclusion of Saudi Arabia should Riyadh decide to join in.

High level contacts were earlier held between Riyadh on the one hand, and Amman and Cairo on the other to explore the prospect of Saudi Arabian inclusion in the network as a third partner.

JEA's chief engineer Rihab Al Hamed was quoted as saying the door was open for Syria and Turkey to link their grids with the projected network in a manner similar to a network linking European nations.

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Prevention better than cure

PESTICIDES are being used worldwide liberally and with modest knowledge about their aftereffects on man's health. Some greedy farmers are even suspected of administering hormones to affect artificial growth of their agricultural and horticultural produce. While one can understand and sympathise with the need to use pesticides to contain damage to such products from pests, insects and rodents, one must not be lax as to their short and long term effect on human health whether imminent or potential. This is particularly so if hormones are being illegally used.

Some pesticides, which are widely used internationally, are known or suspected of containing carcinogenic or mutagenic ingredients. The average consumer has no way, on his own, to appreciate the dangers of pesticide residues that seep into his body. He deserves protection and guidance from danger everytime he and his family cook or prepare their daily foods.

We in Jordan have fortunately the reputation of being anything but lax on such matters that affect the health of Jordanians and residents of our country and have rightfully acquired a well-earned reputation of being duly conscious about the need to educate our people and guests on the dangers of pollution in general. Yet in view of the inherent dangers posed by the need to deploy pesticides, there is room for additional effort by the concerned authorities to make doubly sure that the pesticides that are being used by Jordanian farmers meet the stiff standards set nationally and internationally and that no hormones whatsoever are being used by irresponsible farmers. To be sure, the cost of strict enforcement of the government guidelines on the permissible kind of pesticides that may be used nationally and the extent thereof could be prohibitive. But the alternative to this admittedly costly operation could become even more prohibitive should the concerned authorities lower their guard against the temptation of abusing the use of pesticides.

To say the least, one would expect the appropriate authorities to launch a concerted campaign to educate farmers and consumers on how to protect themselves from pesticides or their residues. One would hate to think that our people and their offspring would wake up one day in the future to discover that their bodies have been filled with toxics or carcinogenic or mutagenic substances as farfetched as this may seem now. Should this, God forbid, be the case, it will weigh heavily on the conscience of the whole country. Therefore, now is the right time to make a fresh start to ensure that pesticides are properly and safely used in our country.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i commented Monday on the strange offer Yitzhak Rabin made to the Palestinians detained in Israeli jails when he expressed readiness to release them if they accept to take part in elections for Palestinian autonomy rule. The paper described this offer as an open play and a way to foil the Arab moves towards a full settlement and a means to impose the provisions of the Camp David accords on the Palestinian people. Needless to say that this manoeuvre is designed to draw a wedge within the United Arab ranks and weaken the will and determination of the Palestinians, the paper asserted. Rabin is clearly trying to revive the Camp David agreement reached between Israel and Egypt with the United States blessings and is trying to involve the Palestinian prisoners in a process directed against their own national interest, the paper added. The Israeli minister is trying to do that in the face of mounting world pressure on Israel to accept the international conference and achieve a permanent peace with the Arab countries and at the same time trying to show the world that the PLO is a terrorist organisation pressuring the Palestinians against accepting any offer for peace, the paper concluded.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily commented on the joint Jordanian-North Yemeni Higher Committee meeting that ended Sunday in Amman describing it as a means to bolster the Arab Nation's stance in the economic, political and social fields. Rakan Al Majali, who is also the paper's chief editor, says that the meeting represents a new spirit of brotherly relations designed to boost cooperation and enhance the nation's solidarity in the face of external challenges. North Yemen has always been involved in national issues and has supported Iraq in its eight year long war with Iran and we feel that North Yemen lies in the heart of the Arab Nation backing the confrontation states vis-a-vis the Israeli enemy's ambitious plans in the Arab World, the writer notes. The successful meeting in Amman, the writer continues, is bound to render strength to the whole Arab Nation in its drive to deal with enemies on the eastern and western fronts.

Al Dustour daily commented on the end of the Jordanian-North Yemeni meetings which culminated with the signing of minutes that pave the way for future cooperation in different fields. The meetings that ended in Amman Sunday constitute one major step in promoting Jordan's relations with North Yemen and provides for practical measures for developing and strengthening inter-Arab cooperation in economic, trade, cultural and scientific fields, the paper said. The excellent results of the meetings chaired by the prime ministers of the two countries, the paper added, also embody the very constructive and positive role being played by the leaderships of both countries towards serving their people. It said that Jordan views the minutes signed in Amman Sunday serving as a cornerstone in the coming stage of fruitful cooperation with North Yemen and as a means for bringing more progress and prosperity for the people of the two countries.

Saw Al Shabab dwelt on the same topic and said that Jordan's close economic, social and cultural ties with other Arab countries finds a parallel to it in the on-going moves to bring the European countries together in one unit. The paper said that by drawing closer to the other Arab states, Jordan seeks unity with the rest of the Arab Nation and further progress and development for all its countries.

One day in the life of the intifada

By Susan Rockwell

As we drove down to Ramallah's old city on independence day, we came upon two jeeps parked under the telephone lines in the middle of the road, the soldiers standing on the seats of the vehicles and trying, with a pole, to dislodge the two Palestinian flags dangling from the wires by strings tied to rocks. On the roof of the building next to the jeeps — a government building at that — a Palestinian flag was stretched taut by the wind.

Set around a square, the houses in the old city have one or two rooms, stone floors, high domed ceilings, thick walls, several chairs and a bed or two. At Abu Jamal's house we were served tea, and everyone began to discuss at what time they had heard the announcement of the Palestinian state, and on which radio station, and then talk turned to Abu Ammar (Arafat), how happy he looked on televi-

sion, and how he wore his *kufiyah*. Nasir, Abu Jamal's son, said he wore two, one on his head, and one stuffed into the front of his shirt. Abu Jamal said he knew how Arafat wore it and, draping his end over his head, and the other end across the other temple, and being short, grizzled and overweight, looked very much like Abu Ammar, a thought which must have occurred to him also because he suddenly threw back his shoulders, and, to the sound of our laughter, strode out of the room.

At ten in the morning the bells of all the churches in Ramallah began to ring, and at 10:15 celebrations began in the old city with whistling and chanting. We ran to the doorway of Abu Jamal's house and saw a group of kids fighting over a canvas bag. Inside were Palestinian flags, and banners reading, among other things, "Yes to the independent Palestinian state." Everyone wanted to carry a flag. The celebrants were mostly women and girls — the

walls trapped the heat. Nasir refilled our glasses with strong, cool tea and we pretended to be chatting, and uninterested, in case a soldier burst through the door. Amal, a tiny girl with large eyes and thin, short hair, held a handbag in her hand and whispered some of the story that her grandfather had told earlier, how the army came on Thursday night at 11:30 and ordered everyone to go to the bus station — the women and older children too — and they sat outside in the freezing cold until 1:00 a.m. and the captain said "if any of you throw a stone you will be out here every night". They took *Jamal* aside and said to him "if anyone throws a stone we will come to you and you will tell us who threw it."

Nawal, near the open door, said she'd gone. We gathered around the two-step staircase again, and through the door we could see the gate to the neighbour's courtyard, the stream of soap suds from the washing at Firdous' house, the mosque, the

trees that surround the Catholic church up on the hill and the light blue sky of November. The women had gathered again and were chanting and ululating and clapping and several times some of the girls panicked and ran towards their houses and the children said "they're come!" but Nabil, standing on the bar that hooked the door shut and looking out through the wire of the torn corner of the window above the door said each time "not yet." Then Hanan, whose husband is in prison for five years, ran back ushering all the children into her house and Nabil from his perch yelled "they've come, they're come!" and Abu Jamal yelled to his two daughters to get inside, and the boys fell over themselves pushing into the warm back room where Nawal, standing on a chair near the high window, was saying "they're coming here! Walking! A soldier strode under the window and up the narrow lane to the next neighbourhood.

Then a jeep roared into the square from the alley just to the

left of Abu Jamal's door and as we pressed ourselves against the wall to get out of sight the face of the third soldier who was sitting in the back of the jeep shot by the doorway like the face of someone in the other carriage of a ride in an amusement park, streaking past, three feet away. The jeep sped to Hanan's house, and one soldier, wearing a red *kufiyah* stood on her doorstep, and Nabil announced "they're going into Hanan's house," but Hanan slammed her blue metal door shut, and the soldier returned to the jeep, and suddenly everyone inside Hanan's house began to ululate and whistle, and it seemed her house would explode from the noise. Then Nabil said that they had the son of the baker, and that they were going towards the mosque, and there was no doubt that they were going to make him remove the pictures of Arafat and Abu Jihad that had hung there since the night before — Middle East International, London.

The going gets tough for Shamir in Nablus

By Ian Black

IT TAKES little more than an hour to drive from Jerusalem, north through the bare wintry hills, to Nablus, capital of the Palestinian uprising and the largest town on the West Bank. From Tel Aviv, on the grandly named Trans-Samaritan highway, it takes even less.

Travelling hopefully — for stones and petrol bombs are a routine hazard these days — the visitor arrives in a different world. Only moments after crossing the old Green Line into occupied East Jerusalem, the only "democracy" in the Middle East disappears almost without trace.

Brute violence is the norm. On New Year's Day an Israeli soldier ran amok and fired at a refugee camp when rocks were thrown at his car. Last week, after a martyr's funeral in Tulkarm, an 11-year-old Palestinian boy was shot dead by a plastic bullet and 17 others injured, two critically. The town has been under curfew ever since.

Yitzhak Shamir came to an army camp near Nablus the other day for what should have been a morale-boosting visit to the troops whose task it is to keep

order in the narrow alleyways of the old casbah and in the middle-class suburbs on the slopes of Mount Ebal.

Instead, one after another, the reserve paratroopers gathered on the muddy hillside spoke bitterly of their moral turmoil and outrage at having to do the dirty work of crushing the uprising. "Only a political solution can save us," insisted one soldier.

"In order to enforce order in the casbah we must be brutally violent against people who are innocent of any crime," said another. "I violate army regulations every day and this weakens me and strengthens them. This dead end situation is a disaster. Everything we do bolsters the intifada."

Shamir, huddled in a blue parka against the biting cold, drummed his fingers impatiently on the table in front of him as he listened to the catalogue of frustration. "We hate these PLO terrorists," he shouted afterwards, "because they force us to kill Arab children." General Amram Mitzna, the West Bank military commander, looked embarrassed behind his beard.

A week before that, on nearby Har Bracha, the premier was heckled and abused as a

"traitor." This time his critics were a group of those same zealous Jewish settlers who once called the shots in "Judea and Samaria" and held successive governments in their thrall. Today they are in a state of rising panic at the way Israel seems to be sliding, in spite of itself, towards the unthinkable reality of withdrawal from its "biblical" patrimony.

Shamir's hardline defence minister, Yitzhak Rabin, must have experienced the same giddy sense of uncontrolled collapse when he was repeatedly interrupted in the Knesset on Wednesday as he tried to defend his policy of dealing with the uprising.

"This is a government with a heart of plastic, a brain of lead and a conscience of rubber," said Mohammad Miari of the Progressive List for Peace. "The whole world knows that the stone of the Palestinian David is defeating the oppression of the Israeli Goliat."

Miari, the settlers and the soldiers all got it about right. Thirteen months after the intifada erupted in Gaza, and a month after the American decision to deal with the PLO, Israel is in a state of turmoil.

The pressure is both external and internal and it mounts almost daily. Despite reassurances to the contrary by James Baker, the U.S. secretary of state, and by Mrs. Thatcher, dealing with the PLO has to mean contemplating the creation of an independent Palestinian state. To argue otherwise is to misunderstand the PLO and it represents the yearning for freedom that it represents.

Israel is fighting an unsuccessful rear-guard action against a radically transformed PLO. And thus William Waldegrave's meeting with Yasser Arafat in Tunis provoked far less excitement in Tel Aviv than it did in London. When the whole world accepts Palestinian rights, who cares about Whitehall?

Internally, the cost of crushing the uprising is becoming unacceptable. At least 350 Palestinians, including nearly 40 under the age of 12, have been killed, and a staggering 10,000 wounded, since the conflagration erupted in December 1987.

Israelis are starting to realise that this cannot continue. Fifty-five per cent of them are said to favour talks with the PLO to it adheres to its promise to refrain from terrorism. The national unity government patched together

elaborate. But give him time. Even Shamir has shifted from his traditional monosyllabic refusal to envisage any change: his grudging readiness to acknowledge a supervisory U.S. role for any peace talks has brought him closer to the international conference idea espoused by the Labour leader. Shimon Peres, who has wisely abandoned foreign affairs for the relative safety of the finance ministry.

The source of all this — the intifada — shows no signs of dying. Half-hearted attempts to enter into a dialogue with what the Israelis like to call "local leaders" have all ended in a firm referral back to PLO headquarters in Tunis. And Arafat, sensibly enough from his point of view, has rejected suggestions that a ceasefire might be a good idea.

Nothing that Israel has offered gives the Palestinians any reason to climb down from the high ground of history and morality to which the efforts and sacrifices of the last year have elevated them. Until that happens — and it now seems increasingly a question of when rather than if — the intifada, as the *Jerusalem Post* put it so starkly and accurately yesterday, "will keep pestering on the very attempts to crush it." — The *Guardian*.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Coordinate holidays

By Salah Abdul Samad

SOME years ago a holiday was given at the same time to all schools, community colleges and universities by the end of the first semester of the scholastic or the academic year; and also at the end of the second semester, thus allowing all members of the same family in Jordan to have a period of relaxation together.

A real re-union of daughters, sons, fathers and mothers used to result from such coordination of holidays between schools and institutes of higher learning, contributing towards stronger family ties and providing a tranquil atmosphere for everyone at home.

In those days, students at different stages of learning used to take their examinations simultaneously; and the atmosphere at home used to be geared to serve their interest, unlike the situation now when no coordination is possible in view of the fact that while some of the family members take their examinations, the others are enjoying a holiday which is reflected in one way or another on the climate at home. The previous arrangement which unfortunately for most Jordanian families was terminated without any good cause, had yielded very excellent results and made everyone happy.

Since the past experience had proved successful, we wonder why the new system should be allowed to continue; but we can understand demands by a majority of people for reinstating the old and successful system that streamlined holidays for schools, community colleges and universities alike. Now that Jordanians are striving to cut down on expenses and rationalise expenditure, it is most beneficial for all to revert to the old and very useful practice of allowing everyone a holiday simultaneously — providing a chance for a vacation for the whole family at the lowest possible rate of expenditure. A return to the old system would clearly allow the family members to pay visits to the numerous historical, tourist and archaeological sites in the Kingdom, thus promoting domestic tourism.

We indeed look forward to rapid and practical formula which entails cooperation from all concerned parties to serve the common goal — Al Ra'i.

LETTERS

Time to reconsider

To the editor:



Henry Kissinger

towards moderation in U.S. foreign policy, it was hardly surprising that moderate conservatives like Scowcroft and Eagleburger are back in government.

"It's just the natural progression... the way the system works," Maynes said.

Is Henry Kissinger back?

By Christopher Hanson
Reuter

WASHINGTON — In the runup to his inauguration as U.S. president, George Bush has made clear his intention to take a cautious, go-slow approach to relations with the Soviet Union.

But President Mikhail Gorbachev, who has proven adept at seizing advantages from the West, a day before Bush formally took office, involved a pledge to withdraw some tactical missiles from Europe.

Since December, he has also

promised unilateral cuts of 50,000 troops and 10,000 tanks in Europe and to begin destroying Soviet chemical weapons.

U.S. officials feel the Gorbachev initiatives have something of a public relations falsehood to them.

Western nations are already beginning to ease credits and loans to Moscow and this is another challenge Washington must face sooner rather than later, they say.

Even if he wished to influence former aides, Kissinger might be powerless to pull strings and make them move his way.

As Foreign Policy Magazine editor and former diplomat Charles Maynes put it: "Scowcroft... is not a puppet. He is very accomplished and is his own man. He has very well-developed views on most international issues."

And given the general trend

towards moderation in U.S. foreign policy, it was hardly surprising that moderate conservatives like Scowcroft and Eagleburger are back in government.

"It's just the natural progression... the way the system works," Maynes said.

The youth of today, the progenitors of the future nuclei families and the carriers of the coming social structure, are either involved in or panic-stricken by wars (chemical and

nuclear) and drugs, disturbed by abused freedoms, neglected values, discarded religions, fanaticism, meager justice and frail democracies, all arising in the name of civilisation, modernisation and development.

Is it too much to wonder about the social structure we will be handing over to our future generations under these circumstances?

Knowing that God in the beginning created heaven and earth, is it too much to ask for God's mercy? Is it too late to minimise the sufferings of our planet earth and of mankind? Is it too late to heal the wounds of both?

Wafa Baban-Tell
Amman

Features



A Hindu Sadhu in meditation buried himself in a pile of sands on the bank of a confluence of three rivers. An estimated 30 to 40 million people are expected to bathe at the rivers for the duration of seven-week long fair.

Hinduism: Many paths to salvation

By Dilip Ganguly
The Associated Press

ALLAHABAD, India — The naked holy man walked past his disciples offering blessings and sacred ash. He raised his hands and hundreds bowed, almost in trance.

Some lay prostrate in reverence to the man, the head of a sect of "Nagars," or naked recluses of Hinduism.

About 200 metres away, a holy man clad in a saffron robe was delivering sermons.

"Why move naked?" he asked his followers and then answered himself. "This is a ploy. You can reach God dressed."

The scenes at Hinduism's biggest "religious" gathering, the "Kumbh Mela" in the central Indian city of Allahabad, give rare insight into a religion that is believed to have existed since the third millennium B.C.

Some 730 million people — mostly in India and Nepal and parts of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mauritius, Thailand and Fiji — belong to the faith.

A half-million holy men and their followers have been camping in Allahabad since Jan. 14, when the fair began. And 30 to 40 million pilgrims are expected to take holy dips during the 7-week-long fair at the "sangam," or confluence, of the three rivers most sacred to Hindus — the Ganges, the Jamuna and the Saraswathi.

The fair, which takes its name from a mythical fight between gods and demons over a pot of nectar, is held every 12 years when Jupiter enters Taurus and the Sun and the Moon are in Capricorn. The importance of the fair varies depending on complicated calculations by Hindu astronomers.

The planetary alignment this year came after a gap of 140 years.

"You can't explain Hinduism," said M.P. Asthana, who has attended four earlier Kumbh fairs. "It is a way of life, where Karmas (deeds) are most important. Even to an average Hindu, the faith is so confusing."

He added: "No one can explain how we got to acquire, and where are, our 330 million gods and goddesses."

Objects of worship range from images and statues of gods and goddesses to living rats. In Hinduism every god has his steed, or vehicle. The rat is the vehicle of Ganesha, on whom the elephant-headed master-of-ceremony god rides.

Hinduism postulates that all

people go through a series of rebirth or reincarnations that eventually lead to Moksha, the spiritual salvation that frees one from the cycle of rebirths.

"With each rebirth you can move closer to or further from eventual Moksha," said Asthana, spokesman for the Uttar Pradesh government.

The deciding factor is one's Karma. Bad actions result in bad Karma, which leads one to lower incarnation and a step closer to salvation.

"But if ones actions have been good or she will reincarnate on a higher level and be a step closer to eventual freedom from rebirth."

Braving the unusual Indian cold with temperature dropping to 3 degrees celsius (37 degrees Fahrenheit), tens of thousands of pilgrims have been taking holy dips in the belief that a bath here during the auspicious planetary conjugation will wash away the sins of a lifetime and release them from the cycle of births and rebirths.

"It is like appearing directly before God for confessions," said Jagannath Dwevedi, the chief administrator of the fair, where 560 million rupees (\$37 million) of government money is being spent to make it a success.

"No one knows how bathing will wash off sins, but the belief is so great that no logic stands," Dwevedi, who also takes ceremonial dips at the rivers confluence, said in an interview.

Before the bath, pilgrims offer milk and marigold flowers to the rivers in a purification ritual and later throw water with bands towards the sky, believing that some drops will reach their ancestors in the heaven.

The "Nagars" among the holy men move naked. And they have a logic too.

"Nakedness ends all dichotomy in human life," said one holy man, refusing to give his name. "We were born naked and therefore should remain naked and die naked."

Fifty-two religious groups have put up sprawling tent homes at the fair. Each has its way and means to reach god. Most of them constantly smoke marijuana. They say it helps to meditate and become closer to god.

"This makes Hinduism unique," said Asthana. "There is no restriction on how you reach your goal — salvation."

Beef and other non-vegetarian food are out of the fair menu because the devout of the Hindus are vegetarian and eating beef is a religious taboo.

Hinduism postulates that all

Hundreds of babies sold in southern Italy

By Barry Moody
Reuters

NAPLES, Italy — The going price for a new-born baby, picked up hours after birth from the hospital is 40 million lire (\$29,000) or more.

And there are plenty of customers in southern Italy's booming baby market.

Magistrates in Naples, centre of the trade, say hundreds of babies are changing hands each year in an illicit traffic which is completely beyond their control.

Some babies have been exchanged for jobs or apartments and one tiny boy was "auctioned" to the highest bidder.

Oreste Ciampa, president of Naples juvenile court, told Reuters he guessed at least 600 babies were sold a year in the southern Campania region alone.

Melita Cavallo, a judge at the court, said in an interview: "We have not been able to stop this trade... If you do not put up a barrier, if people think it is easy, it increases."

"When it is a question of 40 to 50 million lire (\$29,000 to \$37,000)... some people are prepared to do anything."

The mothers of the babies for

sold the children of young prostitutes, Cavallo said. But these were isolated cases.

She believes that in many hospitals and clinics in the region there are intermediaries, nurses, doctors or other staff, who persuade young mothers to sell their babies.

The intermediaries have a list of potential parents and the sale can be arranged within hours. Cavallo said in one recent case a teenager gave birth at eight in the evening and within 12 hours a false father had arrived to claim the child.

Late in December Cavallo persuaded a young mother to confess that a man claiming her new-born child was not the real father. But then she asked how much the court would pay for her baby. "I've had it in my belly for nine months, how much is it?" she said.

Cavallo added: "But this is an exceptional case. Normally the girl just wants to get rid of the baby and forget the experience."

In another episode discovered by Cavallo three men and a woman came to a distraught man's house hours after he had learned at the hospital that his 15-year-old daughter was pregnant by her brother.

They laid piles of banknotes totalling 30 million lire (\$22,000) on the table and proposed taking the girl away until she gave birth. "When we have the baby you can have her back plus another 20 million (\$14,500)," they said.

The father refused but discovered later, after his daughter abandoned her baby at the hospital, that it had been claimed by a false father and taken away.

In other cases girls have given birth with the name of the new mother. "So the baby is born legitimately and nothing emerges. Unfortunately this happens," Cavallo said.

She said one convicted criminal had been caught trying to claim a new-born baby. He had hoped to sell it to a couple and then blackmail them by threatening to reveal the deal.

Cavallo says a trade once confined mainly to peasants and old couples now involves respectable professional people from all classes who want to avoid the long delays and stringent rules required for legal adoption.

"Now it has become so simple everything is doing it," she said.

Cavallo and Ciampa are frustrated by weaknesses in the law and by widely varying attitudes in different courts. Some judges treat defendants indulgently, taking the view that the trade neatly solves both the problem of the unmarried mother and the childless couple.

Under present rules the juvenile court often has to pass a case to normal judges after a preliminary investigation, causing years of delays. "Out of hundreds of cases a few dozen have come to trial and nobody has been sent to jail for more than a few months," Cavallo said.

She said Ciampa wants the juvenile court given total responsibility for child selling cases.

"The judgment must not be fragmented, some for us and some for other judges. We should have total jurisdiction so that contradictory judgments can be avoided," Ciampa said.



Before the revolution in Nicaragua, 120 out of every 1,000 babies born died. Despite the war and near economic collapse, vaccination

and other measures have now cut the death rate to 65. The government aims to reduce even this figure by half.

Unhealthy times in Nicaragua

By Robert Walgate

The revolution in Nicaragua brought a drastic improvement in the provision of health care to the poor. But now the system is threatened by a collapsing economy.

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — The Nicaraguan government has announced plans to reduce infant mortality by half, having already reduced it to 65 per 1,000 since the time of the dictator Somoza — when 120 of each 1,000 babies failed to survive their first year.

But ten years after the revolution, the Sandinistas' greatest success — the health system — is breaking under the weight of a collapsing economy.

An epidemic of virulent malaria is raging in rice-growing lowlands, and tuberculosis and killer childhood diarrhoea and respiratory diseases are increasing once more.

Some diseases, however, are coming under control: those involving vaccination, and where international financing has been available — like polio (eliminated in 1982 with help from the private foundation Rotary International), and diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and measles.

The real problem in the rest of the health system is money. In the face of the attacks from the contra rebels, Nicaragua's defence spending grew from 20 per cent of the budget in 1980 to over 50 per cent in 1987. All other sectors were squeezed: although health is given the same high priority as education, the health budget fell from 14 per cent to just 9 per cent of government spending.

In addition, as a result of inflation, doctors' salaries are worth only a fifth of their real value in 1980. A hospital auxiliary earns 20,000 cordobas a month — and a pair of shoes costs 22,000 cordobas. A trained nurse earns 32,000 cordobas, and a doctor 150,000-200,000 cordobas (about \$30-40) a month.

Essential medical equipment, such as refrigerators to store vaccines, cannot be repaired because spares are unobtainable, and because technicians have left to find better incomes in private medicine, industry and agriculture.

I spoke to Carlos Vanzetti, a

West German neurosurgeon who came to Nicaragua to fight with the Sandinistas against Somoza, and was six months in the mountains before the revolution succeeded. Although he is paid U.S.\$500 monthly by a German charity — a fortune by Nicaraguan standards — he says he finally feels compelled to spend half his week in private practice. (Of Nicaragua's total spending on health, half is in private hands.)

"Many friends of the Sandinistas are having to leave," he says.

Economically, under the pressure of what the United States calls a "low-intensity war," plus the U.S. trade embargo, the country is on its knees. The war has resulted in the death, injury or kidnap of over 50,000 people — nearly 2 per cent of Nicaragua's population of 3.4 million — and caused economic damage valued at the equivalent of 45 years of current export earnings.

The U.S. trade embargo begun in 1984 wiped out 30 per cent of Nicaragua's markets. The collapse of the Central American Common Market under the pressure of the international debt crisis lost Nicaragua another 20 per cent of exports. Falls in world commodity prices have done yet more damage, while Hurricane Joan which devastated the cities of Bluefields on the Atlantic coast, and El Rama on the Rio Escondido, and flattened thousands of hectares of forests, has cost another two years of exports at the current level, according to government estimates.

The United States offered no aid after the hurricane. The World Bank has stopped lending to the Nicaraguan government. Debts total \$9,000 million.

An increase in trade with Western Europe has staved off even worse problems, and much military equipment has been bought by barter trade with the Soviet Union and East Germany. But the balance of payments deficit is

now nudging \$500 million.

Food crop production also appears to have declined, with shortages of the local staples, rice and beans.

Under these circumstances it is difficult to see how anyone, even doctors, can be paid anything — and indeed the government is printing money, with a 50,000 per cent inflation last year alone. At the beginning of the year a Cordoba was 2 cents; at the end it was worth 0.02 U.S. cents. And in December, President Daniel Ortega warned that if 1988 looked difficult, 1989 would be even more so.

Meanwhile, health workers

struggle on. Dr. Dousella Torres, for example, in charge of the vaccination programme for a region including the capital (which receives constant influxes of refugees from the mountains in the north), believes all children in her area, from hovel dwellers in the city to the rural poor, will be receiving polio vaccine (purchased by Rotary International) by this March.

Oral polio vaccine is easy to administer, whereas coverage with injected vaccines like DPT (diphtheria, whooping cough — pertussis — and tetanus) and measles is lower (around 40-50 per cent). But Dr. Torres is making all efforts to increase the proportions.

Together we visited a health centre in Managua which covers 60,000 people in one of the poorest areas of the region. There Tania Perez, the director, says the main problem is diarrhoea — with 31 deaths this year, 29 of them babies under one year old (out of 2,160 births). Hygiene is poor: half the area does not have proper sanitation — though there is a public campaign to build new latrines. She cannot afford equipment to test the water.

With 200 permanent workers and 400 more volunteers for vaccination campaigns — Perez actively searches for cases of diarrhoea, supplies oral rehydration therapy and provides education for the mothers. She says she can't rely on the mothers to make up the oral rehydration mixture

by dissolving an exact mixture of salts in water, during their babies' illness ("they are used to antibiotics"); and she has too few cookers to make up the solution at the health centre.

One of Perez's special and growing problems is tuberculosis (TB); she has 57 cases, 22 of whom are children. But there were no cases in 1986 or 1987. "As the economic crisis worsens, the TB cases go up," she said.

Nutrition levels are also falling: many of her children are undernourished, and "almost daily" she is now seeing children suffering from the protein-deficiency disease kwashiorkor.

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Back in the Managua health centre, Tania Perez showed me her refrigerators for storing vaccine: most were out of order, and the only working machine was ten years old. On its last repair, the technician told her that the failures were caused by fluctuations in the voltage supply. The electricity had already halted five times that day. Even the Nicaraguan central vaccine store hangs on a knife edge, with two of the main cold cabinets relying on single compressors (two are needed for safety).

Perez told me that vaccination levels were held back by low levels of education — with pregnant women refusing vaccines. Even worse, a church group that is strong in the area, the Evangelical Church — a "counter-revolutionary force" says Perez — teaches people to refuse "foreign bodies" in the blood, including vaccinations. "So we are being more aggressive in health education," she says. Although illiteracy is now down to 21 per cent, reading ability and attention spans are not great, and the need for films, seminars and audio-visuals.

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Japan to give more aid

TOKYO (R) — Japan plans to spend more both defending itself and helping out the Third World in the coming year, government officials said Monday.

The government's draft budget calls for it to shell out 3.92 trillion yen (\$31 billion) on defence and 756 billion yen (\$5.9 billion) on economic assistance in the year beginning April 1.

That represents a 5.9 per cent increase in defence spending and a 7.8 per cent rise in aid outlays in yen terms.

Government officials said that the plans mean that Japan's de-

fence spending will exceed one per cent of its projected gross national product (GNP) for the third year in a row.

They also mean that Tokyo will remain the world's top aid donor, giving away more than \$10 billion, after taking off-budget items into account.

"By having such a large increase, Japan will be able to make a further step ahead to

achieve what it promised at the Toronto economic summit to boost foreign aid over the next five years," Foreign Minister Sosuke Uno told reporters.

The defence budget includes an 18.2 per cent increase in spending to help maintain U.S. military bases in Japan, to 142.3 billion yen (\$1.1 billion).

The United States, wrestling to reduce its huge budget deficit, has been pressing Japan to increase its support for American military bases here.

"I believe the United States will give us high marks for that," Tazawa said.

Both the defence agency and the Foreign Ministry successfully wrangled more money out of the tight-fisted Finance Ministry in negotiations over the last week.

The Finance Ministry had originally planned a 5.2 per cent increase in defence spending, the same as this year, and a 5.9 per cent increase in aid.

Officials said the talks went relatively smoothly, a development analysts said was due to the large amount of tax revenues the government expects to raise in from the booming economy.

The government budget still must be approved by parliament, but given the ruling party's overwhelming majority there, its passage is virtually a foregone conclusion, analysts said.

Wednesday, Molson and Carling O'Keefe Breweries announced a merger that forms

probability of finding oil in the Dead Sea area," he said.

Aides said the hole would explore an area 6,000 metres below the surface.

The salty waters of the Dead Sea, nearly 400 metres below sea level, are rich in minerals.

Shabah also said Egypt con-

tinued to supply oil independent of differences such as those over the Taba Red Sea enclave.

Israel targets Dead Sea for oil

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Energy Minister Moshe Shabah said Monday Israel would begin drilling for oil in the Dead Sea in October.

"We are planning a deep drill in the Dead Sea in October, to go for the first time through the salt there and find out if there is oil or not," he said in a news conference.

"We have spoken of this for many years and I support those who think there is a very high

probability of finding oil in the Dead Sea area," he said.

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tinued to supply oil independent of differences such as those over the Taba Red Sea enclave.

Oman hopes for new oil finds

MUSCAT (R) — Omanis are scouring their mountainous Gulf state for fresh oil reserves to steer their economy through the fluctuations of world petroleum prices.

But after sharply lower crude prices in recent years, prospects are looking up for the country, which relies on oil for three-quarters of its revenues.

It has based its 1989 budget on an oil price of around \$12.50 a barrel, yet its crude is currently trading around \$2.50 above that on international markets.

"I believe there is a chance of an increase in price (in 1989), but not much... if the price of oil goes to \$15 or \$16, we will be very glad," Oil Minister Said Ibn Ahmad Al Shanfari said in an interview with Reuters.

Oman, bordering the Gulf and the Arabian Sea, is banking on exploration to boost oil reserves that are modest compared with those of neighbouring Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emi-

ties. "They have done a remarkably good housekeeping job here after the oil price crash in 1986."

He said recession that hit the Gulf as a whole had not spared Oman, but that development of agriculture, fisheries and light industries and controls on government spending led the country to weather the storm well.

Oman plans to pump 600,000 barrels of oil daily in 1989, the same as last year.

Expecting an oil price of about \$12.50 a barrel, Oman last year forecast a 1989 budget deficit of 402 million Omani riyals (\$1.06 billion) against a 1988 deficit of 252 million riyals (\$655 million).

But Omani oil was on sale last week for around \$15 per barrel, after world prices firmed when a new OPEC pact to curb output took effect from the beginning of January.

Budget revenue in 1989 is estimated at 1.21 billion riyals (\$3.14 billion), more than 10 per cent down on 1988.

A Western financial analyst in Oman said the country had adapted well when oil prices tum-

bled. "They have done a remarkably good housekeeping job here after the oil price crash in 1986."

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Poland fears lowering living standards

WARSAW (R) — The Polish government, facing high inflation and fears of unrest, is under conflicting pressures to raise or lower living standards in 1989, Finance Minister Andrzej Wroblewski said in an interview.

He told Reuters the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was pressing Warsaw to lower living standards by about 10 per cent this year and speed up efforts to balance the economy.

But Wroblewski said the government was also "under tremendous social pressure to increase living standards and return at least to the level of 1978."

Opposition economists calculate that per capita income in 1988 was still 13 per cent below 1978, Poland's best year before the crash of the late 1970s and

early 1980s.

He estimated 1988 inflation at 60-70 per cent compared with 26 per cent in 1987 and said the 1989 target was 55 per cent, but did not indicate how this reduction would be achieved.

Wroblewski indicated Poland was unlikely to meet IMF conditions but said Poland hoped for an agreement with the fund in 1989 which could allow normalisation of relations with the Paris Club of creditor states and new World Bank credits.

The country's current political atmosphere, with the government edging to an accord with the banned Solidarity trade union, was a favourable factor, he said.

"Our assessment is that the only realistic thing under current conditions is to maintain existing

standards while improving economic growth," he said.

An IMF mission was due in Poland within five weeks and Wroblewski hoped that formal talks for IMF approval for the government's economic adjustment programme would open soon.

Wroblewski said despite improved exports Poland was still able to pay only half the annual interest on its \$37.9 billion foreign debt which was growing.

"At the moment we are repaying \$1.7 to \$2 billion annually. It is only about half of our obligations. We should pay \$3.5 to \$4 billion a year," he said.

"Our assessment is that the only realistic thing under current conditions is to maintain existing

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Candidates are encouraged to register during that period.

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5- Secretary chair with arms	1
6- Metal shelves	2
7- Typewriter, English model Facit	1
8- Typewriter, electric, English model Facit	1

Those interested can inspect the above-listed items at the UN/WFP office in Shmeisani, near Shmeisani Hospital to present their offers. Last day for bidding is Thursday 9 February 1989.

Wave of mergers worries Canadians

TORONTO (AP) — A flurry of mergers in Canadian airline, beer and gasoline industries have ignited concern that prices will rise and competition will fall as Canadian companies strive to compete in the U.S. and world markets.

The defence budget includes an 18.2 per cent increase in spending to help maintain U.S. military bases in Japan, to 142.3 billion yen (\$1.1 billion).

The United States, wrestling to reduce its huge budget deficit, has been pressing Japan to increase its support for American military bases here.

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Officials said the talks went relatively smoothly, a development analysts said was due to the large amount of tax revenues the government expects to raise in from the booming economy.

The government budget still must be approved by parliament, but given the ruling party's overwhelming majority there, its passage is virtually a foregone conclusion, analysts said.

Wednesday, Molson and Carling O'Keefe Breweries announced a merger that forms

the largest beer company in Canada with 53 per cent of the market. That puts it ahead of current no. 1 John Labatt Ltd, which now has 43 per cent of the market.

A top goal for the new, larger Imperial Oil Ltd. won the bidding for no. 4 Texaco Canada with about \$4.1 billion (4.9 billion Canadian). Imperial is 70 per cent owned by U.S.-based Exxon.

The only larger deal in the Canadian oil industry was last week's \$4.6 billion (5.5 billion Canadian) purchase of Dome Petroleum Ltd. by Hmoco Canada.

The free trade issue was muted in the week's three announcements because the Canadian beer industry received special protection in the pact signed last year by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and then-president Ronald Reagan. American airlines did not get unlimited access to Canadian airports under the deal and local gas stations also were ex-

cluded.

The Federal Bureau of Com-

petition has forced nine compa-

nies to restructure or abandon

their mergers since 1986. At least

two others were brought before a

competition tribunal for public

hearings, according to the Globe

and Mail newspaper. It said the

bureau's statistics show the num-

ber of acquisitions in Canada

increased from 641 in 1984 to 1,082 in 1987.

Regulations require companies to wait 21 days from announcement to complete a merger, although the competition bureau still can require changes after that three-week period.

Shirley Carr, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, said she was concerned about the potential for lost jobs. "The corporations decided we should have free trade and now, ever since the election, we've been hearing about nothing but mergers and closures," she told the Toronto Star.

Mulroney's Progressive Conservative Party won its second consecutive majority government in the Nov. 21 election, clearing the way for the trade agreement to take effect after the bitterly fought campaign.

Imperial, which markets under the Esso brand in Canada, guaranteed the jobs and benefits of the 3,300 Texaco employees, but some job reduction was ex-

pected as a result of the beer and airline mergers.

A recent study by the federal government's Statistics Canada Agency showed that the share of business assets held by the top 25 Canadian corporations increased to 35.1 per cent in 1986 from 29.6 per cent 10 years before.

S. Arabia moves ahead in restructuring oil industry

ABU DHABI (R) — Saudi Arabia has taken a new step in restructuring its oil industry by establishing a local refining and marketing company, but the organisation's details are still vague, oil industry sources in the Gulf said.

Gulf-based oil traders said the new company might start functioning early this summer.

Saudi Arabia is the world's biggest oil exporter with an OPEC production quota of 4.52 million barrels per day. After a price crash in 1986 it set out to cut costs and integrate operations from the oil fields to petro stations in consumer states.

In November, it established the

mineral operations.

"The announcement (on Samarc) has been made, but it will take a while for the company to be operational," an oil analyst in the Gulf said. "The details are still lacking."

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Sports

JORDAN TIMES, TUESDAY JANUARY 24, 1989 7

Jordan Rally '89

AMMAN (J.T.) — The route for the 1989 Jordan International Rally, scheduled for May 17-19, has been finalised by the organising committee. The rally will pass many areas of historic and touristic interest.

Leg one on Wednesday May 17 is based in and around the Greco-Roman city of Jerash, there will be 7 high speed special stages — all but one on asphalt roads.

The second leg on Thursday May 18 will reach Qatrana in the south but the main focus of interest will be the regrouping halt

at Ma'in Spa Village and the subsequent 14 kilometre special stage from the spa, which is below sea level, up to the top of the hills near Madaba.

Leg three — and the longest of the rally — will reach Petra where the main regrouping halt will be located. The winning car is expected to arrive at the finish point at the Marriott Hotel at 7.00 p.m. on Friday May 19.

Total distance of the rally will be approximately 1.100 kms including 31 special stages which will account for about 300 kms.

U.K. board bars Eddie Edwards from circuit

LONDON (R) — Eddie "the Eagle" Edwards has been dropped from next month's world ski jumping championships because the British Ski Federation thinks he is jumping worse than ever.

Edwards, who is currently in the United States recovering from an injury, said he would be complaining.

But John Leaning, Nordic director of the Federation, said on Sunday: "We set Eddie a minimum standard to achieve for entering the world championships. He had to jump within 25 per cent of an international competition-winning jump. He hasn't done that."

"He has been jumping worse during the past year than ever before and I think the trouble has been that Eddie has been spending so much time on commercial ventures."

"I can understand why, but he is going to have to take time off from these to concentrate on his training."

Edwards now fears that orga-

nisers of other international ski jump competitions may follow Britain's lead and stop him from taking part.

He said: "I am very shocked at this. I did not expect this to happen and had been looking forward to taking part in the championships."

He is still recovering from the broken collarbone and bruised kidneys he suffered during a disastrous practice jump in Austria earlier this month.

He added: "I aim to show everyone that this year Eddie Edwards will be a success if given the chance."

"I do take my sport very seriously. I do train and I do not want to be a failure. I even practice my take off technique in my hotel bedroom. I admit I haven't been jumping all that well recently but I know I have improved and can do much better this year."

Edwards sprang to fame at the Winter Olympics in Calgary

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN
AND OMAR SHARIF
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TIME FOR SOME PESSIMISM

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♦ K 9 7 5
♦ Q 5
♦ K 9 4 2
♦ J 5 2
♦ 10 8 6 2
♦ J 7 3
♦ J 6
♦ K 10 8 6
♦ 9 7 5 3
♦ K 10 8 6
♦ Q 9 7 5 3
EAST
♦ 10 8 6 2
♦ J 4 3
♦ J 7 3
♦ J 6
♦ K 10 8 6 4 2
♦ 9 8 7 5 3
♦ Q 9 7 4 3
SOUTH
♦ A Q
♦ K 8
♦ A Q
♦ A Q 9 7 4 3
WEST
♦ 10 8 6 2
♦ J 4 3
♦ J 7 3
♦ J 6
♦ K 10 8 6
♦ Q 9 7 5 3
♦ Q 9 7 5 3
The bidding:
South West North East
2 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass
3 ♠ Pass 4 ♠ Pass
5 NT Pass 6 ♠ Pass
Pass Pass
Opening lead: Two of ♠

There is no contract so easy that you can afford to relax your concentration. If you look only at the North-South hands, it might seem that declarer could claim his slam. He thought so, too, with disastrous results.

South's two-club opening was artificial and strong; the rest of the auction was natural. Five no trump showed interest in a grand slam and obviously inquired about trump

support—if South had been interested in general controls, he could have bid the hand differently. When North showed no top club, South elected to play six clubs to protect his tenaces.

Declarer won the spade lead in hand, crossed to dummy with the queen of hearts and led the jack of trumps. When East showed out, declarer could not avoid losing two trump tricks.

Correct technique is for South to win the first spade trick with the ace. Since only four trumps in the West-hand threatens the contract, declarer should next lay down the ace of clubs. Despite the bad news, the contract can still be made if declarer guesses the distribution.

Assuming that the two of spades lead indicates a four-card suit, declarer must overtake the queen of spades with the king and ruff a spade. He gets back to the queen of hearts and ruff's another spade. After cashing the ace-king of hearts and ace of diamonds, declarer overtakes the queen of diamonds with the king.

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Despite intense campaigning and mobilisation of supporters, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress I Party suffered a humiliating defeat in Tamil Nadu. In one of many rallies, supporters campaigned in front of a giant portrait of late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Gandhi defeat makes early election unlikely

MADRAS, India (R) — A regional party romped home in state elections in India's southern Tamil Nadu state Monday, humiliating Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) Party and making an early general election unlikely.

"A victory here would have persuaded him (Gandhi) to bring general elections forward, but now he will stick to the original schedule of year-end," said C.T. Kurien, director of the Madras Institute of Development Studies.

Because of India's ferocious summers, elections are held early or late in the year. The government's five-year term expires in December and the choice was between a quick poll in March or April or a full-term one in November or December.

Gandhi's conqueror in Saturday's Tamil Nadu state assembly elections was Tamil politician Muthuvel Karunanidhi, who led the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Party to victory in the last major poll before the general election.

The DMK won 143 of the 232 seats at stake with eight results still to be declared. Congress (I) won only 25.

Two former film actresses, both claiming to be political heirs of the late movie *idol* and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran, finished with fewer than 30 seats between them.

The faction headed by

Ramachandran's mistress, Jayalalitha Jayaram, pushed Congress into third place by winning 27 seats. His widow Janaki lost her own seat and her party won only one.

"This election is a turning point in Tamil Nadu. It is an end to glamour politics, with people voting on ideological grounds," said a Congress leader and member of parliament, Jayanti Natarajan.

Two northeastern states, Mizoram and Nagaland, also voted Saturday.

Early results showed Congress with seven seats against five for a local grouping in Nagaland and Congress leading with three seats to two for local parties in Mizoram.

Victory in both these small states would not compensate for the huge defeat in the south because of Tamil Nadu's size and its 50 million Tamils with close ethnic links to Sri Lanka's minority Tamils.

Karunanidhi said after the results were declared that the Sri Lankan Tamil problem would be a priority issue for him.

He said the DMK victory would give him a better opportunity to help the Tamils in Sri Lanka, where some 50,000 Indian troops are trying to quell resistance by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Karunanidhi said LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran had sent him a message expressing his hope for a DMK win.

The faction headed by

Pretoria agrees to cut Namibia force

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (Agencies) — South Africa said Monday it was willing to eliminate 2,300 policemen from the territory as it prepared to grant independence to Africa's last colony. It also named a special envoy to Namibia.

South Africa has ruled Namibia, also known as South-West Africa, for 74 years, but has agreed to begin implementing a United Nations independence plan April 1, leading to elections Nov. 1.

South African Foreign Minister P.W. Botha said Sunday evening his country had informed United Nations (U.N.) Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar that the Namibian police force could be cut from 8,300 to 6,000 during the transition to independence.

Prior to Botha's announcement, South Africa had said it would reduce the police presence to 7,000. Botha said the revision was made after a "thorough analysis of the security requirements."

South Africa also has an estimated 50,000 soldiers in Namibia, but is required to reduce the

figure to 1,500 by the end of June under the U.N. plan.

Also, Willem Retief, currently South Africa's ambassador to West Germany, has been named special envoy to Namibia, the government-run South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) reported Monday.

Retief will serve as a liaison between the current transitional government, the South African-appointed administrator general and the U.N. special representative to Namibia, Martti Ahtisaari, the SABC said.

In a related development, South Africa's acting president, Chris Heunis, was to meet Monday with local government officials from Namibia to discuss the independence process.

Heunis, serving as president while P.W. Botha recovers from a stroke, met Friday with the

Namibian cabinet for similar talks.

The U.N. in 1966 revoked South Africa's League of Nations mandate to govern Namibia. Since then, the South-West Africa People's organisation (SWAPO) has been waging a liberation war. SWAPO is widely regarded as the favourite to win the November elections.

U.N. peacekeeping troops are expected in Namibia by April, but the exact size of the force has not been determined. Black African nations and non-aligned countries want to send 7,500 troops at an estimated cost of \$700 million. However, the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, who will be paying most of the cost, want to limit the force to about 4,000 or 4,500 soldiers.

Rightist dissent

Dissident members of South Africa's biggest white supremacist group threatened Monday to form a breakaway movement after an unsuccessful attempt to

question their leader over his relationship with an ex-model.

The dissident members of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB) said a split in the political far right seemed inevitable after armed supporters of AWB leader Eugene Terre Blanche Saturday ejected them from a meeting.

"It is a sad day for the Afrikaner cause... this is the beginning of the end for the AWB," dissident spokesman Dries Alberts told Reuters. "Terre Blanche was not man enough to stand up to questioning."

The wheelchair-bound Alberts' eviction by burly guards in racing uniforms reminiscent of Hitler's "Brownshirts" prevented him from calling for an inquiry into Terre Blanche's relationship with ex-model Jani Allan, now a journalist.

They were surprised by police last month after apparently breaking into a public monument after dark.

Allan, 37, earlier described the bearded AWB leader in her popular weekly interview column as a hunk. Both deny any romantic

involvement.

Fellow dissident Jan Groenewald, formerly Terre Blanche's deputy, told the Johannesburg Citizen newspaper that the AWB had shown itself to be disorganized and unconstitutional.

"It is now clear that the AWB cannot be saved any more. It is time for a new organisation to be formed," he said.

The AWB, espousing Afrikaner (Dutch descent) supremacy, strict racial segregation and the eventual formation of a white-only homeland, refuses to say how many people support it. One newspaper estimated it had a following of about 100,000.

The extremist movement models itself on Hitler's Nazi Party with a Swastika-like flag, open palm salutes and strong military overtones.

It has gained its strongest support from poor Afrikaners who fear the increasing job and status competition from non-whites as the ruling right-wing National Party gradually reforms the republic's apartheid laws.

COLUMN 10

Gauguin on display in Paris

PARIS (AP) — Some 300 works by Paul Gauguin, the French painter who rejected the comforts of middle-class life to pursue art in the Polynesian wild, have gone on show at the Grand Palais in the first major retrospective of his work in 40 years. "Gauguin," running through April 24, is a two-million-dollar co-production with the Art Institute of Chicago and the Washington National Gallery of Art, which presented slightly different versions of the show last year. The French have not had a comprehensive look at Gauguin since 1949, and they have embraced his works wholeheartedly. The show has been billed as the blockbuster art event of the season, drawing some 6,000 visitors daily. Critics say the highlights are 11 paintings on loan from the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad and Moscow's Pushkin Museum, which rarely leave the Soviet Union. They include "Pastorales Tahitiennes" (1892), a brightly coloured bucolic scene which Gauguin believed was his "best" Tahitian effort. With its flat surface, exotic flowers and sensuous women in native dress, the work sums up Gauguin's essence.

Idaho fights invaders

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho (AP) — They are fighting invaders in Idaho Falls, and the outcome is still in doubt. "We have never had so many moose in Idaho Falls in the winter time," said fish and game regional wildlife biologist Justin Naderman. Since Jan. 1, 11 moose have wandered into the city, only to be subdued and moved out on the desert north of town. But six more are reportedly still on the loose, though damage has been confined to some nibbled shrubs and knocked-down fencing. "In the winter, when they get a taste of ornamental shrubs, they just don't want to leave," said Naderman, who leads an almost-daily foray into downtown after the invaders.

False alarm culprit found

CASTLEGAR, British Columbia (AP) — Security guards, baffled for eight days by false alarms at Twin Rivers Elementary School, have found the culprit — a teddy bear. Principal Paul Phipps said the mystery was solved when a maintenance worker smacked his hand down on a ladder in frustration. The teddy bear replied with a beep. The bear, a learning tool for special children's needs, responds with a beep to touch, movement or sound, Phipps said. Someone had left the bear on a heat register. Every time the hot water heater clanked at night, the bear beeped, triggering a silent alarm repeatedly over the winter holidays. "All we had to do was move the toy," Phipps said. "The bear's been behaving himself ever since."

Bored hunter blacks out city

MOSCOW (AP) — A bored hunter killing time with his gun shot out a power-line insulator, blacking out a city of 140,000 people and causing more than \$1.5 million in lost industrial production, it has been reported. It took almost seven hours for the power line to be repaired and for electricity to be restored to the southern city of Maikop, about 1,300 kilometres south of Moscow, and to surrounding villages, according to the Communist Party daily newspaper Pravda. The outage brought Maikop factories to a halt, and caused \$1.6 million in lost production, Pravda said. Losses totalled \$190,000 at a local furniture factory and \$416,000 at a plant making industrial communications equipment, it said. Pravda did not say when the blackout occurred, and indicated the bored marksman had not been caught. "So who is going to answer for this?" Pravda asked.

Slowest chase on record

GREENSBURG, Pennsylvania (AP) — A man was charged with stealing a forklift after leading police on one of the slowest chases on record. "I guess you could say we had a high-speed chase at 11 kilometres per hour," said police Lieutenant Ronald Waugaman. Clinton J. Gandy, 48, allegedly hopped on the 1981 Caterpillar tow motor, turned the keys that had been left in the ignition and drove off. An employee of Overly Manufacturing Company, which owns the vehicle, called police, and a cruiser with flashing lights and a blaring siren caught up with the crazy Caterpillar. "When he saw the car, he just turned around, smiled, waved and kept on going," Waugaman said.

Scowcroft believes Cold War not over

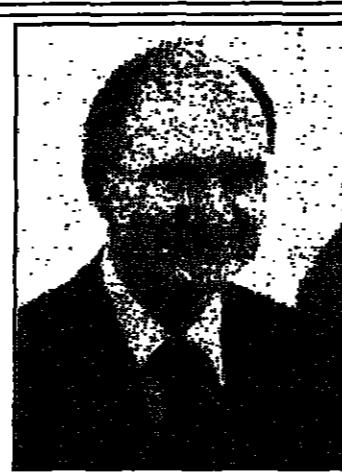
WASHINGTON (R) — Brent Scowcroft, President Bush's national security adviser, said Sunday he does not believe the Cold War is over despite the recent improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations.

Scowcroft, interviewed on ABC television's "This Week With David Brinkley," said that while Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev needs to ease tension to address the "awesome problem" of restructuring his country's economy, he also remains interested in "making trouble for the Western alliance."

"I think he believes the best way to do it is a peace offensive rather than to bluster the way some of his predecessors did," he said.

"I think the Cold War is not over. There may be light at the end of the tunnel (but) I think it depends partly on how we behave," he said.

Scowcroft denied that he opposed former President



Brent Scowcroft

Reagan's cherished plan to construct a land-and-space-based shield against enemy missiles — the so-called Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) — but suggested that he believes the new administration should slow down the programme.

"I have been an opponent of moving forward with a massive programme until we understand clearly how it fits in with what we want to do," he said.

Scowcroft denied that he

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

3 Azerbaijanis disciplined over unrest

MOSCOW (R) — Azerbaijan's interior minister and two other ministers were among thousands of party and government figures disciplined after ethnic unrest in the republic last year, the Communist Party newspaper Pravda said Monday. Pravda said the interior minister, A. Mamedov, was given a strong reprimand and his deputy was dismissed. It said the minister of communal services and the minister of light industry were punished, but gave no further details. The official news agency TASS disclosed last week that more than 2,500 party and government officials in Azerbaijan had been disciplined for being actively involved in riots and demonstrations, encouraging them or failing to halt them. It did not specify who had been disciplined.

U.S. rallies mark abortion ruling

NEW YORK (AP) — Thousands of anti-abortion and pro-choice activists held rallies across the United States Sunday marking the 16th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortions. "Change in direction is brought about by citizens at the grassroots level," Asa Hutchinson, a lawyer and former federal prosecutor, said at a rally in Little Rock, Arkansas. Opponents of abortion have been trying to win reversal of the 1973 court ruling legalising abortions during the first two-thirds of a pregnancy. The Supreme Court recently has decided to review a Missouri state law that declares life begins at conception, a case that could counteract the 1973 ruling. An estimated 4,500 abortion protesters marched in Saint Paul to the state Capitol. There were no arrests.

Chun's brother's term upheld

SEOUL (R) — An appeals court Monday upheld a seven-year jail sentence for the younger brother of former South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan for involvement in a multi-million dollar corruption scandal, court officials said. Chun Kyung-Hwan, 45, was charged with embezzlement of more than \$10 million in public funds, tax evasion, accepting bribes and other irregularities while heading the state-backed Saemaul Rural Development Agency during his brother's eight-year rule. He was arrested shortly after the former strongman stepped down in February last year.

Basque group extends truce

MADRID (R) — The Basque separatist guerrilla group ETA said Sunday it was extending a two-week-old truce for the next two months to facilitate talks with the government. ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom) announced the extension in a statement to the Basque newspaper Egin, its usual channel of communication. A spokesman for Egin quoted the statement as saying ETA was opening a "period of detente" which would last until the Basque national day March 26. "That clearly means a truce," he said. The statement said the extended truce followed an agreement between ETA and the government to begin negotiations in Algeria.

tory retorts, or ovens. "I looked at it as gore. It was sickening," he said.

Edwards said David Sconce sometimes spoke about setting records for stacking bodies. "It was over 13 and the old records were continually being broken," he said.

He told of holding a flashlight while David Sconce pulled gold teeth from the mouths of a dozen corpses, and said he once saw him smash a corpse's jaw with a crowbar to get at gold teeth.

The prosecution has not calculated the number of bodies that allegedly were handled illegally by him.

"They were cremating like 8,000 bodies a year," he said, and multiple cremations were conducted on a daily basis.

immigrants to Sweden said that they wept, while 53 per cent of adult Americans cried after the murder of U.S. President John F. Kennedy in 1963.

This attitude, prizing the rational above sentiment, also sets the tone for Swedish politics and business life. Swedish firms are avid users of new technology and ruthless in scrapping what is old and inefficient.

Trade unions, which are often represented on the boards of companies, often do not oppose job cuts if there are rational arguments to back them.

"If a social reform or an industrial innovation seems to be backed up by rational argument, you can't oppose it in Sweden just by being angry or appealing to the past," Daun said.

When Prime Minister Olof

Palme was assassinated in

1986, 24 per cent of adult

Swedes admitted to crying. But

44 per cent of first generation

immigrants to Sweden said that they wept, while 53 per cent of adult Americans cried after the murder of U.S. President John F. Kennedy in 1963.

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F. Kennedy in 1963.

The fact that a person really dislikes free abortion for example is hardly ever considered a legitimate argument.

Only objective arguments are considered valid."

Rationality leads many

Swedes to believe that it is the

duty of the state to care for the

sick, the old and the infirm.

Old people are hustled off to

institutions where they are ex-

perately cared for.